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OTHER MATTERS

Complementarity of the core activities of the United Nations Environment Programme and its Global Environment Facility interventions

Note by the secretariat

The secretariat has the honour to circulate, in the annex to the present note, the note by the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on the complementarity of the core activities of UNEP and its Global Environment Facility (GEF) interventions, dated 9 September 1998.

* UNEP/HLC/3/1.

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Annex

United Nations Environment Programme

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PROGRAMME DES NATIONS UNIES POUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT · PROGRAMA DE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS PARA EL MEDIO AMBIENTE

ПРОГРАММА ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ ОБЪЕДИНЕННЫХ НАЦИЙ ПО ОКРУЖАЮЩЕЙ СРЕДЕ

UNEP

9 September 1998

Note of the Executive Director of UNEP
to the Twelfth Meeting of the GEF Council,
Washington, D.C., 14-16 October 1998.

INTRODUCTION

1. At the eleventh meeting of the GEF Council, held in New Delhi, India on 30-31 March 1998, the Chief Executive Officer was requested, in conformity with Paragraph 22 and Annex D, paragraph 7, of the *Instrument for the Establishment of the Restructured GEF*, to transmit: the Joint Summary of the Chairs for the Council meeting; the Report on the Second Replenishment of the GEF Trust Fund; and, the GEF evaluation reports to, UNDP, UNEP and the World Bank, inviting each of them, in its role as an Implementing Agency, to take note of the replenishment and to accept and take appropriate action on the policy recommendations.

2. The Fifth Special Session of the Governing Council of UNEP, held in Nairobi on 20-22 May 1998 considered these matters. In decision SS.V/6 on the Global Environment Facility, the Council welcomed the results of the first meeting of the Assembly of the Global Environment Facility, held in New Delhi from 1 to 3 April 1998. It also welcomed the successful conclusion of the negotiations on the Second Replenishment of the Global Environment Facility and noted the policy recommendations on actions to be undertaken by the Global Environment Facility to maximise its effectiveness and impacts, while respecting the prerogatives of the governing bodies of the implementing agencies.

3. Paragraph 2(c) of the Policy Recommendations for the Second GEF Replenishment Period provides that "***Aware that UNEP's mandate includes strong focus on the global environment, participants recommend that UNEP should better integrate GEF activities and its own operations on the global environment and should ensure synergy between UNEP's regular activities addressing global environmental issues and its proposals for GEF funding. At the same time, UNEP's proposals for GEF funding should be consistent with the principle of additionality - GEF should not fund activities that are part of UNEP's mandate and regular programs.***"

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4. Taking into account paragraph 22 and Annex D, paragraph 7, of the *Instrument for the Establishment of the Restructured GEF*, the Participants recommended that each Implementing Agency prepare for Council review in 1998 a strategy and timetable showing how the Agency will integrate global environmental activities into its own policies and programs and report regularly, thereafter, to the Council on its implementation. The present note is submitted by the Executive Director of UNEP to the twelfth meeting of the Council pursuant to this request, and taking into account paragraph 2(c) of the policy recommendations for the second replenishment.

I. A New UNEP for the Next Millennium

5. The need to strengthen and equip the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), in order that it can effectively perform a refocused role in a new and evolving international context, has been highlighted recently in several intergovernmental fora. The nineteenth session of the UNEP Governing Council, held in Nairobi from 27 January to 7 February 1997, adopted the Nairobi Declaration on the Role and Mandate of UNEP which recognises that UNEP has been and should continue to be the principal United Nations body in the field of the environment. This declaration states that UNEP's **"role is to be the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, that promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations System, and that serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment."**

6. To this end, the Ministers and heads of delegations attending the nineteenth session of the UNEP Governing Council, agreed on the following core elements of the focused mandate of a revitalised UNEP:

"(a) To analyse the state of the global environment and assess global and regional environmental trends, provide policy advice, early warning information on environmental threats, and to catalyse and promote international co-operation and action, based on the best scientific and technical capabilities available;

(b) To further the development of international environmental law aiming at sustainable development, including the development of coherent inter-linkages among existing international environmental conventions;

(c) To advance the implementation of agreed international norms and policies, to monitor and foster compliance with environmental principles and international agreements and stimulate co-operative action to respond to emerging environmental challenges;

(d) To strengthen its role in the co-ordination of environmental activities in the United Nations System in the field of the environment, as well as its role as an Implementing Agency of the Global Environment Facility, based on its comparative advantage and scientific and technical expertise;

(e) To promote greater awareness and facilitate effective co-operation among all sectors of society and actors involved in the implementation of the international environmental agenda, and to serve as an effective link between the scientific community and policy makers at the national and international levels; and

(f) To provide policy and advisory services in key areas of institution-building to Governments and other relevant institutions."

7. The Nineteenth Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly, convened for the purpose of undertaking an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21, held in New York from 23 to 27 June 1997, reconfirmed the role of UNEP as the principle United Nations body in the field of environment, in conformity with Agenda 21 and the Nairobi Declaration. Paragraph 123 of the Programme for the further Implementation of Agenda 21 provides that **"UNEP is to be the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations System, and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment."** In addition, the General Assembly took note of the UNEP Governing Council decision 19/31 of 4 of April 1997 concerning governance, and underlined the fact that the revitalised UNEP should be supported by adequate, stable and predictable funding.

8. The General Assembly also noted that *"at the international and national levels there is a need for, inter alia, better scientific assessment of ecological linkages between the conventions; identification of programmes that have multiple benefits; and enhanced public awareness-raising for the conventions. Such tasks should be undertaken by UNEP in accordance with the relevant decisions of the Governing Council and in full co-operation with the Conferences of Parties to and governing bodies of relevant conventions."* The General Assembly also recommended that *"the role of UNEP in further development of international environmental law should be strengthened, including the development of coherent inter-linkages among relevant environmental conventions in co-operation with their respective Conferences of the Parties or governing bodies. In performing its functions related to Conventions signed at Rio or as a result of it and other relevant conventions, UNEP should strive to promote the effective implementation of these conventions in a manner consistent with the provisions of the respective conventions, and the decisions of their respective Conferences of Parties."*

9. The General Assembly also drew attention to the relationship between UNEP and the Commission on Sustainable Development, and recommended that UNEP should continue providing effective support to the Commission, through, *inter alia*, scientific, technical and policy formulation, analysis and advice on global environmental issues.

10. In addition, the report of the Secretary General on "Renewing the United Nations: Programme for Reform" (A/51/950) provides that *"UNEP is the environmental voice of the United Nations and the principal source of the environmental inputs into the work of the CSD. High priority must be given to it according to its status, strength and access to resources it requires to function effectively as the environmental agency of the world community. This has been confirmed by the Nairobi Declaration, adopted by the UNEP Governing Council, at its nineteenth session, in February 1997. UNEP's role as the focal point for harmonisation and co-ordination of the environment-related activities must be strengthened, and the Secretary General intends to lend his full support to this process."*###

11. In his report, the Secretary General also announced that he intends to provide further recommendations on the reform and strengthening of United Nations activities in the environment and human settlements areas. In order to prepare recommendations to the Fifty-second Session of the United Nations General Assembly, the Secretary General appointed a Task Force under the Chairmanship of the Executive Director of UNEP. The Task Force was mandated, *inter alia* to; review existing structures and arrangements through which environment and environment-related activities are carried out within the United Nations; and to prepare proposals, for consideration by the Secretary General and subsequent submission to the General Assembly on, reforming and strengthening activities in the environmental and human settlements areas.

12. The report of the Task Force was submitted in June 1998 to the Secretary General. The Task Force attached the greatest significance to the effective use of GEF resources and recommended that *"Consistent with the GEF Instrument, UNEP's role in providing environmental advocacy, analysis and advice in shaping GEF priorities and programmes should be strengthened, building on UNEP's current responsibility for ensuring the scientific underpinning of GEF activities. UNEP should act as catalyst and advocate for new directions and should take the lead among the three GEF Implementing Agencies in providing environmental advice. This role is consistent with UNEP's status as the lead agency in the UN system for identifying large-scale environmental threats and proposing remedial measures "*.

13. The Task Force also recommended that there be increased collaboration among the three Implementing Agencies, in accordance with relevant GEF decisions.

14. In the light of these developments, the Executive Director of UNEP, in his policy statement to the Fifth Special Session of the UNEP Governing Council (Annex 1), held in Nairobi on 20-22 May 1998, proposed the following areas of concentration of UNEP activities for the short and medium term:

a. Emergency response capacity and strengthening of the early warning and assessment functions of UNEP;

b. Co-ordination and development of environmental policy instruments;

c. Freshwater;

d. Industry and technology transfer; and,

e. Support to Africa.

15. Decision SS.V/2 of the Fifth Special Session of UNEP Governing Council on the Revitalisation, Reform and Strengthening of UNEP, welcomed the proposals of the Executive Director for areas of concentration of the activities of UNEP. The Executive Director was accordingly requested *"to re-examine the 1998-1999 programme of work approved by the Governing Council at its nineteenth session, in the light of the core elements of the focused mandate of the Nairobi Declaration, and the proposed areas of concentration, with due regard to the needs of environmental education, within existing programme of work; and to develop further his new proposals in this regard in the context of the programme of work for the biennium 2000-2001, and to make recommendations thereon to the Governing Council at its twentieth session"*. The twentieth session of the Governing Council of UNEP will be held in early 1999.

16. In the light of the importance attached to strengthening the role of UNEP in the GEF as called for by the Nairobi Declaration, the fifth Special Session of UNEP Governing Council adopted two decisions (SS.V/6 concerning the strengthening of the role of UNEP in the GEF, and SS.V/7 concerning Land Degradation) relevant to UNEP's role in the GEF. #####

II. The New Profile of UNEP in the GEF

17. The governing bodies of UNEP have called for the strengthening of the role of the organisation as an Implementing Agency of the GEF. The Executive Director of UNEP, in his statement on 1st April 1998 at the first meeting of the GEF Assembly presented UNEP's priorities in the GEF. The CEO/Chairman of the GEF in his address to the fifth Special Session of UNEP Governing Council suggested areas of intervention of UNEP in the GEF based on its comparative advantage.

A. The need for the strengthening of the role of UNEP in the GEF (Decision SS.V/6)

18. Operative paragraph 3(e) of the Nairobi Declaration calls for the strengthening of *"the role of UNEP as an Implementing Agency of the Global Environment Facility, based on its comparative advantage and scientific and technical expertise."* Decision 19/12 adopted by the nineteenth session of UNEP Governing Council:

- *Urges* the Executive Director to take such additional actions as are deemed necessary to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations Environment Programme to fulfil its designated role in the Global Environment Facility;
- *Reaffirms* the commitment of the Governing Council to strengthen the involvement of the United Nations Environment Programme in the design and implementation of Global Environment Facility Programmes and projects; and
- *Urges* the Executive Director to continue to strengthen the linkages between the United Nations Environment Programme and the Global Environment Facility.

19. At its second meeting, held in Nairobi on 2-4 March 1998, UNEP's High-Level Committee of Ministers and Officials welcomed the Secretary General's decision to establish a Task force on reforming and strengthening United Nations activities in the environment and human settlements field, and noted that several issues required special attention from the Task Force or the Governing Council, including the need to enhance UNEP's role as an Implementing Agency of the GEF.

20. At its Sixty-second meeting, held in Nairobi on 16 April 1998, UNEP's Committee of Permanent Representatives endorsed the recommendations related to the GEF submitted by its Sub-Committee I. The Committee noted the *"improved performance by UNEP in the Facility, but stressed the need to clarify the role of UNEP."* The Committee was of the view that *"currently, UNEP participation constituted only 3% of the total fund of GEF, meaning that the Programme was not an equal partner with the other participating agencies."* Accordingly, the Committee *"recommended that, in the light of the upcoming review of GEF, the Governing Council should further address the issue of UNEP participation in GEF, with a view to its enhancement and the Secretariat was requested to prepare a document for Governments to address the issue of UNEP participation in GEF, with a view to clarifying its role in the partnership of the three implementing agencies."* ####

21. Decision SS.V/6 on the Global Environment Facility adopted by the Fifth Session of UNEP Governing Council:

a. *Welcomes* the progress made by the Executive Director in strengthening the role of the United Nations Environment Programme in the Global Environment Facility, pursuant to decision 19/12 of 7 February 1997 and the Nairobi Declaration on the Role and Mandate of the United Nations Environment Programme;

b. *Also welcomes* the results of the first meeting of the Assembly of the Global Environment Facility, held in New Delhi from 1 to 3 April 1998;

c. *Further welcomes* the successful conclusion of the negotiations on the Second Replenishment of the Global Environment Facility, and notes the policy recommendations on actions to be undertaken by the Global Environment Facility to maximise its effectiveness and impacts, while respecting the prerogatives of the governing bodies of the Implementing Agencies;

d. *Further welcomes* the revitalised profile of the United Nations Environment Programme as an Implementing Agency of the Global Environment Facility, as contained in the statement of the Executive Director to the first meeting of the Assembly of the Global Environment Facility;

e. *Invites* the Executive Director to take such additional actions as are deemed necessary to strengthen further the revitalised role of the United Nations Environment Programme in the Global Environment Facility, taking into account the decisions of the March 1998 meeting of the Global Environment Facility Council, and the statement of the first meeting of the Global Environment Facility Assembly, and to present a report on those actions for consideration by the Governing Council at its twentieth session;

f. *Also invites* the Global Environment Facility to support the Executive Director's efforts aimed at strengthening the role of the United Nations Environment Programme in the Global Environment Facility in accordance with the terms of reference of the Facility.

22. In addition, the fifth Special Session of the UNEP Governing Council adopted its decision SS.V/7 on land degradation. By this decision, the Council welcomed the identification by the Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the Global Environment Facility, in his statement to the Council, of the issue of land degradation as a priority area on which UNEP should focus. This decision also notes the statement of the first meeting of the GEF Assembly which, inter alia, states that the "*GEF should seek to better define the linkages between land degradation, particularly desertification and deforestation, and its focal areas and to increase GEF support for land degradation activities as they relate to the GEF focal areas.*" The UNEP Council requested the Executive Director of UNEP, in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the Global Environment Facility, to examine ways to further strengthen the role of the United Nations Environment Programme in the Global Environment Facility in activities aimed at combating land degradation as they relate to the focal areas of the Global Environment Facility.

B. UNEP's programme priorities in the second phase of the GEF

23. The statement of the Executive Director of UNEP to the First GEF Participants' Assembly highlighted the following priority areas which should guide UNEP's programmes in the future, namely:

(i) Environmental emergencies/catastrophes such as the forest fires in Indonesia and Brazil and the lessons offered by the El Nino phenomenon;

(ii) Strengthening relationships with environmental conventions;

(iii) The development of economic instruments and practices and their use to foster more uniform standards among nations. In this regard particular emphasis will be placed on a follow-up to the Kyoto Protocol including initiatives on Clean Development Mechanism;

(iv) Integrated management of water resources;

(v) Environmental problems resulting from urbanisation including water pollution, habitat loss, deforestation, carbon-emitting energy use and transportation policy;

(vi) An increased focus on chemicals including special reference to Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs);

(vii) The development of clean technologies in partnership with industry and business and their transfer to developing countries; and

(viii) Mobilisation of the wider scientific and technical community as well as the development of strategic partnerships with the private sector, civil society, NGOs, and regional institutions and Secretariats as a means of strengthening links between science, environmental management and policy.

24. In his statement to the fifth Special Session of UNEP Governing Council, the Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the GEF, acknowledged that UNEP has considerable experience and networks in the international waters focal area and cross-cutting issue of land degradation that should be brought to bear in the GEF operations. In addition, and subject to the GEF Council approval, he suggested that UNEP's comparative advantage in the GEF may be best addressed in the following three areas: assessment; scientific information, best practice, and policy analysis; and capacity-building and training for the global environment.

25. Based on the above decisions and considerations, the overall objectives of UNEP in the second phase of the GEF are to:

(a) provide environmental advocacy, analysis and advice in shaping GEF priorities building on UNEP's current responsibility for ensuring the scientific underpinning of GEF activities in co-operation with STAP;

(b) contribute to the GEF ability to make informed strategic and operational decisions through scientific and technical analyses, including targeted research; methodology/tool development and application; learning and dissemination programmes as well as demonstration projects, particularly in new and emerging environmental issues such as biosafety, sustainable use of biological diversity, fair and equitable sharing of benefits, agro-biodiversity, and indigenous knowledge;

(c) relate national actions to the global environmental objectives of the GEF through enabling activities; public awareness and education; and translating international environmental commitments into national legislation and regulations;

(d) advance and promote regional, sub-regional and transboundary co-operation on priorities of global significance and, in particular, in land degradation with special emphasis in Africa. In the area of international waters, UNEP's objective is to provide intellectual leadership and to guide, through the Global International Waters Assessment, the future developments of the GEF portfolio; and

(e) promote a major GEF activity in the area of transfer of technology, including assessment of technological options, barrier removal projects for promoting sustainable technologies.

26. More specifically , UNEP's programmatic focus in the GEF, will be based on the following strategic categories of activities:

Assessment: As the "authoritative advocate for the global environment" UNEP has a wealth of experience and networks in the area of environmental assessment, built during its more than 25 years of experience as evidenced by, the Global Environment Outlook, and the Global Assessment of Soil Degradation, as well as the Global Biodiversity Assessment financed by the GEF.

During the Phase II of the GEF, UNEP will focus on the following: the Global International Waters Assessment (GIWA); Wind assessment; a regionally based assessment of Persistent Organic Pollutants and assessment of technological options, as well as other environmental assessments aimed at the further development of the objectives and the operations of the GEF and the global environmental conventions.

Regional Transboundary Collaboration: In many regions of the world major issues affecting the global environment relate to the management of transboundary/shared natural resources - water catchments; contiguous forest ecosystems; grazing lands; oceans and seas -which cannot be effectively managed by each country on its own, but need to be addressed in co-operation between the affected countries. UNEP has always placed considerable emphasis on joint, collaborative, regional and sub-regional approaches to the resolution of environmental issues impacting upon shared/transboundary natural resources. This is best exemplified by UNEP's Regional Seas Programme with its supporting legal instruments and by UNEP's work in desertification. By building and strengthening its regional capacity and delivery mechanisms, UNEP has developed strong partnerships at the regional and sub-regional scale which are utilised to facilitate regional co-operation and partnership. UNEP's experience in regional and transboundary/shared ecosystems is recognised in the *GEF Corporate Business Plan FY99-FY01*. Projects specifically tailored to address shared and/or transboundary ecosystems will be a major focus of UNEP's work in the GEF, particularly in international waters, biodiversity and land degradation.

Targeted Research: With its scientific and technical capability in the field of the environment, UNEP is well placed to play a leading role in advancing the GEF targeted research agenda in accordance with the policy adopted by the Council in March 1997. In operationalizing the GEF research policy, UNEP will focus on those activities that build synergy and complementarity between the GEF related environmental conventions, as well as activities aimed at furthering scientific knowledge and removing scientific uncertainties concerning emerging environmental issues related to the implementation of the environmental conventions.

Innovative Demonstration and Pilot Activities: As the GEF evolves and additional guidance is provided by the Conferences of the Parties to the Global Conventions for which it serves as financial mechanism, the need for GEF innovative, pilot and demonstration approaches will become increasingly apparent. Based on its comparative advantage, UNEP, in accordance with its mandate, will play a leading role in promoting such activities to assist eligible Parties to address emerging environmental issues including *inter alia*: biosafety; sustainable use of biological diversity; fair and equitable sharing of benefits; agro-biodiversity; and, the role of financial instruments in meeting the objectives of the GEF-related environmental conventions and protocols.

Methodological Frameworks and Tools: UNEP has a unique role to play in fostering the development and application of methodologies and tools to address environmental issues at the national, regional and international levels, particularly in bridging the gap between science and operations in the field in environment and policy. In this context, UNEP will further the development of "framework" activities (e.g. methodologies, tools etc.) to address priority issues that are not being adequately dealt with in current GEF operations.

Enabling Activities: As the leading environmental entity in the United Nations System, UNEP has played a critical role in facilitating the development of the global environmental conventions. A critical element in providing practical guidance concerning the implementation of those conventions, particularly in developing countries, is bridging the gap between national objectives and global environmental benefits. UNEP will continue to play an important role in assisting developing countries in honouring their commitment under the GEF-related Conventions. In the second phase of the GEF, UNEP will take the lead in promoting enabling activities to support African countries in meeting their commitments under GEF related conventions including, the Convention to Combat Desertification and its relevant regional annex.

Structured Learning: As enabling activities mature to a sufficient extent, UNEP's focus will shift in emphasis to reviewing the outcome of such activities with a view to: assessing the extent to which they have been successful and cost effective in assisting developing country Parties in implementing the Conventions; analysing the reasons for those that have failed; considering policy and programmatic responses to identified problems; and bringing proposals for remedial and further action to the attention of the GEF.

Capacity Building and Technical Assistance: In the area of capacity building and technical assistance, UNEP will concentrate on those areas in which it has developed particular competence such as: environmental law; information and data management systems; building technological capacity at the national and regional levels; strengthening the GEF operational focal points; and mobilising the scientific and technical community to enable them to be more effective advocates for GEF issues in their countries. In the area of environmental law, UNEP will focus in particular, on translating the objectives and provisions of the relevant Global Conventions into national legislation, as well as the provision of policy guidance that encompasses the integration of environmental concerns into national decision-making.

Environmental Awareness/Public Education: Consistent with the recommendation of the "Study of GEF's Overall Performance" UNEP will seek to develop activities in collaboration with the GEF Secretariat and the other Implementing Agencies that develop an outreach and communication strategy designed to target GEF multiple constituencies, including the focal points and relevant government agencies, NGOs and civil society, the media and the private sector. UNEP's focus will be in translating an understanding of global environmental issues, including those addressed by global Conventions, into national policy actions.

Barrier Removal, Technology Innovation and Transfer: In the GEF context factors which mitigate against environmental sustainability are considered as barriers including, constraints to technological innovation and transfer; institutional; administrative; technical; and, or policy related difficulties mitigating against change in practice. Associated with the concept of "barrier removal", projects across the focal areas will be promoted by UNEP/GEF that focus on incentive measures and economic instruments, as well as the utilisation and transfer of emerging technologies in GEF projects.

Short-term response measures: Based on its experience in assisting eligible countries to access GEF resources under short-term measures as evidenced by the Monk Seals and the Forest Fires in Indonesia Medium Sized projects, UNEP will continue to play a leading role in responding to environmental emergencies that may arise from time to time and which require prompt and immediate GEF intervention.

27. In implementing its programme priorities for the second phase of the GEF, UNEP will build strategic partnerships with key scientific and technical institutions and other major stakeholders such as NGOs. In this regard, special attention will be paid by UNEP in promoting Medium Sized Projects aimed at increasing and broadening the involvement of stakeholders, and major groups in addressing global environmental issues. The special relationship between UNEP and STAP will be further strengthened.

CONCLUSION

28. Based on the Nairobi Declaration, the overall goal of UNEP in the GEF is to be the leading environmental Implementing Agency that sets the global environmental agenda, and promotes the environmental dimension in GEF operations based on the best available scientific and technical, information and expertise as well as the state of the art environmental assessments.

29. As highlighted above, the new profile of UNEP in the GEF will be complementary and additional to the focused mandate of the revitalised UNEP as contained in the Nairobi Declaration, and policy statement of the Executive Director endorsed by the fifth Special Session of UNEP Governing Council. In the short and medium term, UNEP's proposals for GEF funding based on the principle of country ownership, will be complementary and additional to the revised UNEP's work programme for 1998-1999 as well as to the work programme for the biennium 2000-2001 that will be adopted by the twentieth meeting of UNEP Governing Council, early in 1999.

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